

Mary Jo Collie Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to a novice?

The Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree is the terminal degree in my field of nursing. By 2015 it (DNP) will be fully integrated into the Nurse Practitioner (NP) degree programs. The DNP is a clinical degree that puts NP's in line with pharmacists, physical therapists, audiologists, and others who have incorporated doctorate degrees into their curriculums. Nurse Practitioners play a huge role in providing health care in the U.S. and are responsible for performing physical exams, ordering and interpreting diagnostic tests, diagnosing, and treating patients of all ages for acute and chronic conditions. We are also responsible for providing in-depth patient education and counseling. The role of NP's in providing primary care is expected to expand and become more demanding as more Americans are provided with access to health care through the Affordable Care Act. It makes sense that we should be trained at the doctorate level.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

In my opinion, furthering one's education is never the wrong choice. I read a quote by Erma Bombeck once that really stuck with me- it was something like "*When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a bit of talent left and could say, I used everything You gave me*". I knew I still had plenty of room to grow and expand my knowledge base in nursing. I also felt that obtaining my doctorate would help promote the nursing profession as a whole and provide more career opportunities for me in the future.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

Certainly, I think there can be value in it, depending on the site. Social networking can be instrumental in developing inter-professional relationships as well as a sense of community when used appropriately.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Mindfulness yoga really relaxes me. Curling up on the sofa with my husband for a "movie marathon" night is also relaxing when I need a break from school-work.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

I can honestly say, after spending my first several semesters only reading textbooks; I had to make a conscious effort to read more outside of school. I just finished reading Khaled Hosseini's novel *And The Mountains Echoed* and *The Year of Fog* by Michelle Richmond.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

I received my Master's degree from Radford just over 10 years ago. Several of my previous professors that I gained so much respect for during that time were still here when I began this program. This is one of the things that compelled me to return to RU. Professors like Dr. Ginger Burggraf, Dr. Sally Strauss, Dr. Laura LaRue, Dr. Kereen Mullenbach, Dr. Eunyong Lee, and others have been invaluable to the RU nursing program. My most meaningful academic relationship has been with Dr. Tony Ramsey. He and I went through the NP program together at RU all those years ago. Since then he has accomplished so much, inspired and motivated countless nursing students to fulfill their dreams of becoming nurses, led by example, and has remained humble and grounded. Dr. Ramsey has been a constant source of encouragement and leadership during times when I felt I couldn't write one more word, much less one more paper.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

At some point, around my second or third semester, I started realizing how each class prepared me for the next and how I was able to incorporate and pull knowledge from the previous semesters to aid

my thought processes and writing. Suddenly, it was all coming together. Also, I discovered Albert Einstein was dead-on when he said, "*The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know*". :)

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?

I would *want* to be, however flying is not something I am very fond of so I'm pretty sure Mars would be out of the question!

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

I love my husband's homemade chili, particularly in the winter. As a true southern girl, grits (with parmesan cheese) are also at the top of the list!

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

I would be working in primary care as a Nurse Practitioner as I am now and procrastinating about going back to school.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

December 14, 2013, you're all invited.